

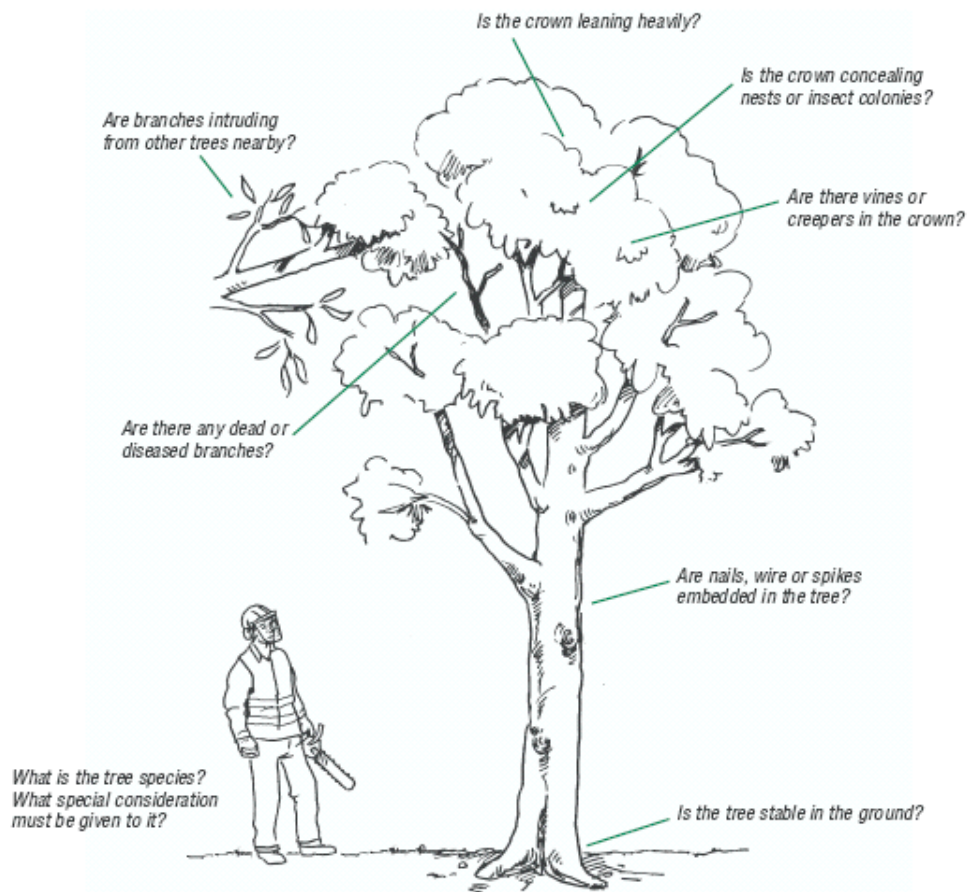
Tree trimming/arbicultural industry

Tree assessment and site planning/preparation

Tree integrity

The integrity of the tree is **critical** to the safety of those working on or around it. Every tree must be inspected before work begins to determine whether it can be climbed safely, or whether other work methods must be used.

The illustration below shows many of the conditions which could result in serious risk if they are not identified prior to starting work.



Site and work planning

In planning to do a tree cutting job, you should think about the job as a whole and answer several questions:

Tree issues

- What particular characteristics of this species should be taken into account?
- Is the species, or this particular tree, susceptible to branch failure when under load?
- Is the tree dead or alive?



- Is it stable in the ground?
- Is the crown leaning heavily in one direction?
- Are there loose or 'hung up' branches or vines/creepers, fungus, fruiting growths, nests or insect colonies present in the crown?
- Is there any evidence of decay at the base of the tree, in the trunk, or in the branch forks?
- Are there any objects (nails, spikes, wire etc) embedded in the trunk or branches?
- Are there other trees adjacent that may intrude into the crown?

Method of work

- What are the options for cutting the tree?
- Is the tree suitable to be climbed?
- Exactly how will the tree be cut and in what order will things happen – take branches off on the way up, or down etc?
- Do we have suitable and sufficient equipment to proceed with the job?
- Is the equipment in good working order?
- Will the job require the use of ropes to assist directing the tree to the ground?
- Where will the tree be falling to, and are there any obstacles in the way? If so, how do we avoid them?
- Are there any overhead power lines to take into account?
- What will be the route taken to remove branches from the site?
- How do we keep the public or home owner away from the 'danger zone'?
- Do we have sufficient crew to do the job without cutting corners?
- How will we communicate with each other during the cutting operations? Hand signals? Climber yelling 'clear' (or the like) before cutting a branch? etc.
- Are there any underground services present (water, gas, phone, electricity or data) that may have been affected by root systems?
- Are there any exposed roots that present a trip hazard to workers?

Emergency response

- If a climber is being used, is there a suitably trained and skilled rescue climber on site ready to affect a rescue if needed?
- What do we do in the event of something going wrong?
- Do we have a list of emergency contacts, and an exact location of where we are at the site, on hand at the site to tell the emergency service operators if needed?

Good planning, appropriate equipment, well trained operators and sound work methods should minimise the risk of an incident occurring.

[Some material in this sheet has been taken from a Worksafe Victoria publication 'Working Safely with Trees: recommended practices for the amenity tree industry', July 2001. For future updates of this document, visit www.worksafe.vic.gov.au]

For more information on workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit www.deir.qld.gov.au

Disclaimer: Any advice given to you as an obligation holder by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Small Business Advisors is given only to assist you to discharge your obligations under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 (Qld). Compliance with this advice does not relieve you of your obligations under that Act. Any advice is given on the basis that you will make your own independent assessment of what action is necessary to ensure your compliance with the Act.

Whilst all care will be taken in providing advice to you, the Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and its inspectors or advisors will not be liable for any errors or omissions or for any loss or damage suffered by you or any person which arises (directly or indirectly) from your reliance on this advice or for any breach by you of your obligations under the Act.